

also turning up sporadically in unexpected localities. Movements not worked out. Nepal eastward through N. Bengal, Sikkim, Bhutan... Assam, Nagaland.... Also the humid Sahyadris or Western Ghats and their outliers from a little north of Bombay (limit not established)..." This

first sighting of the bird in Rajasthan is of special interest.

June 11, 1997

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10. APARTMENT NEST OF THE PYGMY WOODPECKER *PICOIDES NANUS*

On February 2, 1992, I saw a pygmy woodpecker (*Picoides nanus*) excavating a fresh hole in a dead branch of a live *Bombax ceiba* tree at the Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary, Kerala. The nest-hole was being excavated on a branch about a metre long, that already had four other holes. This hole was the second and about 40 cm from the tip of the branch. The holes were more or less evenly spaced and were ca 15-20 cm from each other. All were of uniform dimension (3.3 cm diam) and hence were presumed to be earlier nest/roost cavities of the pygmy woodpecker. The branch was soft, its bark peeling off and hence preferred for nesting. Subsequently, the bird occupied the nest. The nesting was successful and two young ones were raised in due course.

Woodpeckers generally avoid nesting near old nests, as these may be known to potential predators and competitors (Nilsson *et al.* 1991;

Sonerud 1985; Sedgwick and Knopf 1992). Besides, old nest substrates may be weakened by decay as smaller woodpeckers generally prefer weaker and softer substrates which, especially in tropics, may decay fast and be unsafe (Killham 1983; Hagvar *et al.* 1990; Lang and Knight 1975). Yet the choice of this branch for nesting indicates a shortage of nest substrates for these birds, and calls for better forest management practices. This would ensure the availability of suitable branches for nesting.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study was funded by the Wildlife Conservation Society, New York, U.S.A.

February 28, 1997

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11. RANGE EXTENSION OF RUFOUSBELLIED BABBLER *DUMETIA HYPERYTHRA HYPERYTHRA* (FRANKLIN)

THE COMPACT HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN by Sálim Ali and S.D. Ripley (1987)

mentions the range of rufousbellied babbler *Dumetia hyperythra hyperythra* from Simla in